

Opposition of RB 5447

To Whom It May Concern,

I am gravely concerned over the bill being considered. I am a certified special education teacher. I work with students with severe autism as well as severe challenging behaviors. I have wanted to be in this field for years but struggled to find an employer that puts the students first. Last year, I found my dream job. I began working at a private non-profit school for these children I love so much. So, what makes them different? They put the needs of the students before the budget. If the state votes to regulate the funding for organizations this will be detrimental to my students. This year my employers have been able to increase the quality of service to our students by hiring more special education teachers, registered behavior technicians, and instructional assistants. This has made it so I can spend daily time with each of my students. It also ensures the quality of teaching and giving me time to make sure each of my students is meeting their potential. If you cut into our funding with regulations and determine what is necessary for schools to be effective you are tying my hands as a teacher, you are lessening the quality of service, and you will negatively impact the outcome of each student. Please, keep in mind, the students that come to me are the children that are the most challenging to teach do to their diagnosis and challenging behavior. Essentially, you will be taking away their best chance for a more independent future, with regulations. In the future, this will cost the state more over time as they will need more services as adults.

My team and I work tirelessly to assist our students to learn goals and objectives determined by their **Individualized** Education Program. Please, do not take the individual out of the IEP! The Federal government has made it the right of every child to receive Free **Appropriate** Public Education (FAPE). My students need an **appropriate** school to meet their needs, and they have found it in Milestones Behavioral Services. Please, do not take that right away from my students, my school, and those of us that love to serve them.

Sincerely,

Catherine Dube-Meisenholder

Special Education Teacher at Milestones Behavioral Services in Milford, CT

Resident of 244 Ball Pond Road New Fairfield, CT